

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

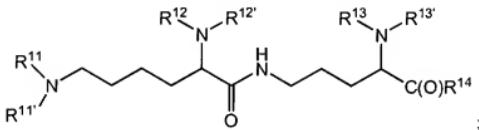
Claim Status

Claims 1-38 are pending and new Claims 39-40 are added herein. Support for the new claims can be found in [0134] of the specification as filed. Claims 12, 14-15, and 18-21 are also amended herein; support for the foregoing amendments can be found in the specification as filed.

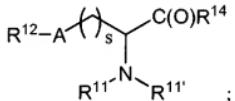
#### **Response to the Restriction Requirement**

The Examiner has restricted the originally filed claims into seven groups:

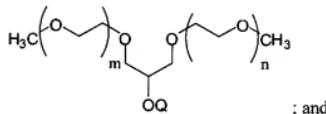
- I. Claims 1-11, drawn to a peptide having the formula:



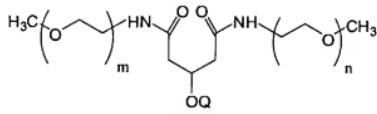
- II. Claims 12-22, drawn to an amino acid having the formula:



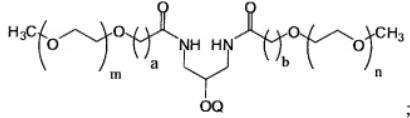
- III. Claims 23-31 in part, drawn to a branched water-soluble polymer having the formula:



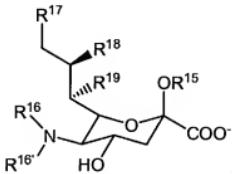
- IV. Claims 23-31 in part, drawn to a branched water-soluble polymer having the formula:



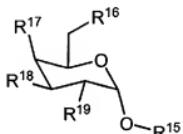
- V. Claims 23-31 in part, drawn to a branched water-soluble polymer having the formula:



VI. Claims 32-35, drawn to a branched water-soluble polymer having the formula:

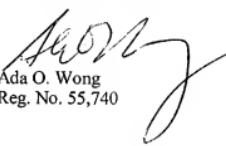


VII. Claims 36-38, drawn to a branched water-soluble polymer having the formula:



In response, Applicant hereby elects Group II (Claims 12-22) for initial examination. Furthermore, as new Claims 39-40 are dependent upon claims of Group II, Applicant earnestly beseeches that these claims be examined in conjunction with said claim group. Applicant expressly reserves the right to prosecute other non-elected claims at a later stage. In view of the foregoing remarks and amendments, it is believed that the application is now in form for examination on the merits and an early and favorable office action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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